Everybody’s business: Gustavson’s COM 405

COM 405 Career Preparation Across Borders is a mandatory experiential learning course for Gustavson undergrads. Through the course, BCom student Leat Ahrony got a student discount to attend The Art of Marketing conference in Vancouver along with almost 1,000 other delegates.

“Some speakers,” Leat reported, “talked about the need to understand human psychology in order to support marketing effectiveness. There was also a lively debate on whether ‘Big Data’ was truly valuable, or whether it was creating myopic conclusions. Three brands really stood out for me during the conference – Vancity, Purdys Chocolatier and Lady Gaga.” Find out Leat’s take-aways from those companies in The Art of Marketing: Good values driving good habits on Gustavson’s blog.

Finance and investment

Where we invest our dollars is one of the most important factors that shape world outcomes, say the authors of Tri-criterion modeling for constructing more-sustainable mutual funds in the October 2015 issue of the European Journal of Operational Research. Sustainable investing is a growth industry that takes into account environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) measures. To find out how effective the sustainable mutual fund industry is in checking those measures, finance scholars from the universities of Regensburg and Georgia studied a cross section of US mutual funds to assess how well ESG measures are embedded in their portfolios. They found that the industry has “substantial leeway to increase the sustainability quotients of its portfolios at even no cost to risk and return, thus implying that the funds are unnecessarily falling short on the reasons why investors are investing in these funds in the first place.”

Corruption, supply chain, resource management

The global waste market, from collection to recycling, is worth an estimated US $410 billion a year, generating jobs and incomes. Interpol estimates a tonne of electronic waste could be worth about US $500, which adds up to almost US $19 billion a year. As with any large economic sector, e-waste also creates opportunities for illegal activities at various stages of the waste chain. Waste Crime – Addressing Gaps in the Global E-Waste System in Globe-Net, May 2015, looks at the problems identified by the United Nations Environment Programme’s report, and some solutions.

Sugar Coated marketing, ethics, research

Gustavson’s fondness for cupcakes has been well documented here in the past; maybe now’s the time for us to face up to some unsavoury facts. Sugar Coated, a “compelling investigative doc,” according to Hot Docs, exposes the US sugar industry’s systematic hijacking of scientific study. For 40 years, Big Sugar deflected threats to its multibillion-dollar empire through tactics strikingly similar to the way the tobacco industry disguised the fact that its products are addictive and cause fatal illnesses.

Watch Sugar Coated at Cinecenta on June 28 or 29 and meet (on-screen) Robert Lustig, pediatric endocrinologist; Stanton Glantz, the superstar prof who brought down Big Tobacco; and Cristin Kearns, a dentist and post-doctoral scholar at UCSF School of Medicine.